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the display of flags and streamers here,—with the brilliancy of color in dress, and the fondness for gay parades. Our people, then, do love display of some kind. But this we are told by the refined is not worthy of consideration—it is childish. It is hopeful *because childish*. Take hold of that childish love of display, and educate it—it will become a sense of beauty, and therefrom will spring Art. But check it, and insist rather on looking to “Greece and Rome” for that which we shall love, and men will say for ever, as they say now, “Where is your taste?” Let our critics watch for as carefully, and hail as joyfully every token of that which expresses the true feeling of the people, as now they do for that which imitates antiquity, and we shall see a taste, and Art rising from it as grand as our position in the world of mind justifies. We hope to see the time when our cities will flash like opals and rainbows with rare and beautiful stones—when the house-owners shall have chiselled on their door-lintels the symbols of their affections, and our harbors and rivers shall blaze with sails more gorgeous than those of Cleopatra, and barges whose gold and colors shall enchant the sea. Then will the love of the Beautiful grow nobler with time, and more refined as it is gently cherished, and the taste of a mighty and intellectual nation develop itself in works as mighty, and the love and reverence of the people will follow the artist as the minister to the noblest of their mental delights, as the exponent of their ideal of Beauty and Truth.

Is this an Utopian State? Yet is it attainable, but not so much by the support of individual artists to lead taste, as by building it up, as we have shown, from the foundations—educating the general perception of beauty, and love for it. It is idle to say that the masses can never comprehend High Art, because every great work of Art should be so founded on the common sympathies of humanity as to give some delight to all grades of feeling. The common people looked with love and pride at Raphael and Buonarrotti as they passed through the streets of Rome, and followed with reverential eyes the steps of Dante in his lonely walking. It was because the Painting of those, and the Poetry of this, were founded on things which all knew and loved.

Well, when our great artists and poets come and carry away the hearts of the people, their education into the dogmas and superficialities of Art will be less thought of and better attained. Then, within the carved portals of our merchant princes, shall be found galleries of pictures, which shall kindly welcome all to appreciation and love.

Letters

ON LANDSCAPE PAINTING.

LETTER II.

DEAR SIR:

IN recommending you, in the beginning of your studies, directly to Nature, I would not deceive you with the expectation, that you will thus most speedily acquire the art of picture-making—that is much sooner acquired in the studio or the picture gallery.

I refer you to Nature early, that you may receive your first impressions of beauty and sublimity, unmingled with the superstitions of Art—for Art has its superstitions as well as religion—that you may learn to paint with intelligence and sincerity—that your works shall address themselves to intelligent and sympathetic minds, and spare you the mortification of ever seeing them allotted to swell the lumber of the garret and the auction room.

Form is the first subject to engage your attention. Take pencil and paper, not the palette and brushes, and draw with scrupulous fidelity the outline or contour of such objects as you shall select, and, so far as your judgment goes, choose the most beautiful or characteristic of its kind. If your subject be a tree, observe particularly wherein it differs from those of other species; in the first place, the termination of its foliage, best seen when relieved on the sky, whether pointed or rounded, drooping or springing upward, &c., &c.; next mark the character of its trunk and branches, the manner in which the latter shoot off from the parent stem, their direction, curves, and angles. Every kind of tree has its traits of individuality—some kinds assimilate, others differ widely—with careful attention, these peculiarities are easily learned, and so, in a greater or less degree, with all other objects. By this course you will also obtain the knowledge of that natural variety of form, so essential to protect you against frequent repetition and monotony. A moment's reflection will convince you of the vital importance of drawing, and the continual demand for its exercise in the practice of outline, before you begin to paint.

I know you will regard this at first thought as an unnecessary restriction, and become impatient to use the brush, under the persuasion that you can with it make out your forms, and at the same time produce color, and light, and shade. In this you deceive yourself—as many others have done, till the consequent evil has become irremediable, for slovenly and imperfect drawing finds but a miserable compensation in the palpable efforts to disguise or atone for it, by the blandishments of color and effect.

Practice drawing with the pencil till you are sure of your hand, and not only that,—till you shall have learned by heart the characteristic forms of all objects, animals, and the human figure included, so far as you may require their use in pictures; no matter how long it takes, it will be time gained. You will say that I impose on you a difficult and painful task: difficult it is, but not painful nor ungrateful, and let me assure you that its faithful performance is accompanied by many enjoyments that experience only can enable you to appreciate. Every step of conscious progress that you

make, every successful transcript of the chosen subject, will send a thrill of pleasure to your heart, that you will acknowledge to give you the full measure of compensation.

As a motive to meet with courage and perseverance every difficulty in the progress of your studies, and patiently to endure the frequent discouragements attending your failures and imperfect efforts, so long as your love for Nature is strong and earnest, keeping steadily in view the high mission of the Art you have chosen, I can promise you that the time will come when you will recall the period of these faithful struggles with a more vivid enjoyment than that which accompanies the old man's recollections of happy childhood. The humblest scenes of your successful labors will become hallowed ground to which, in memory at least, you will make many a joyous pilgrimage, and, like Rosseau, in the fullness of your emotions, kiss the very earth that bore the print of your oft-repeated footsteps.

There is yet another motive for referring you to the study of Nature early—its influence on the mind and heart. The external appearance of this our dwelling-place, apart from its wondrous structure and functions that minister to our well-being, is fraught with lessons of high and holy meaning, only surpassed by the light of Revelation. It is impossible to contemplate with right-minded, reverent feeling, its inexpressible beauty and grandeur, for ever assuming new forms of impressiveness under the varying phases of cloud and sunshine, time and season, without arriving at the conviction

—“That all which we behold
Is full of blessings”—

that the Great Designer of these glorious pictures has placed them before us as types of the Divine attributes, and we insensibly, as it were, in our daily contemplations,

—“To the beautiful order of his works
Learn to conform the order of our lives.”

Thus regarding the objects of your study, the intellect and feelings become elevated and purified, and in proportion as you acquire executive skill, your productions will, unawares, be imbued with that undefinable quality recognized as sentiment or expression which distinguishes the true landscape from the mere sensual and *striking* picture.

Thus far I have deemed it well to abstain from much practical detail in the pursuit of our subject, preferring first to impress you with a sense of the elevated character of the Art, which a just estimate of its capacity and purposes discloses, and this course may still be extended in reference to the wide field for its exercise, which lies open before you. If it be true—and it appears to be demonstrated, so far as English scenery is concerned—that Constable was correct when he affirmed that there was yet room for a natural landscape painter, it is more especially true in reference to our own scenery; for although much has been done, and well done, by the gifted Cole and others, much more remains to do. Go not abroad then in search of material for the exercise of your pencil, while the virgin charms of our native land have claims on your deepest affections. Many are the flowers in our untrodden wilds that have blushed too long unseen,

and their original freshness will reward your research with a higher and purer satisfaction, than appertains to the display of the most brilliant exotic. The "lone and tranquil" lakes embosomed in ancient forests, that abound in our wild districts, the unshorn mountains surrounding them with their richly-textured covering, the ocean prairies of the West, and many other forms of Nature yet spared from the pollutions of civilization, afford a guarantee for a reputation of originality that you may elsewhere long seek and find not.

I desire not to limit the universality of the Art, or require that the artist shall sacrifice aught to patriotism; but, untrammelled as he is, and free from academic or other restraints by virtue of his position, why should not the American landscape painter, in accordance with the principle of self-government, boldly originate a high and independent style, based on his native resources? ever cherishing an abiding faith that the time is not far remote when his beloved Art will stand out amid the scenery of his "own green forest land," wearing as fair a coronal as ever graced a brow "in that Old World beyond the deep."

Truly yours,

A. B. DURAND.

LETTERS FROM A LIGHT-HOUSE.

BY A LANDSCAPE PAINTER.

W. LIGHT, December 15.

DEAR S.,—I have at last contrived to add a few weeks more to the sketching season. When all that makes the country most fair is faded and dead, the sea and its rock barriers are still as wild and stern as ever. I am domiciled in W. Light-house, on a long point of land that thrusts itself out into the sea, and from which we have a clear horizon for more than half the points of the compass. A sunrise and a sunset at sea every day!—think of it, city dreamers! Here from morn till night "still shouts the inspiring sea," until one is almost maddened by its eloquence. In these still days the hushed murmur of the surf, beating on the rocks that make barrier to the point, or falling measuredly on the beach, is a sound to me very pleasant; for, apart from the solemn majesty of its monody, and the seriousness of thought it calls to, as a church-bell to worship, it is a part of some of the pleasantest dreams of my childhood.

It seems to me that all of the sea that is grandest is found at its shore. The open ocean never impresses me very powerfully, and there seems more of the spirit of infinity and sublimity in the walk of old Homer's hero "along the sands of the loud-sounding sea," than in all the poetry of the "sea tost" verse of modern time. The regular beat of the surf gives an impression of infinity, and of a mighty element at work which is wanting in the

"Melancholy wash of endless waves."

I was never lost at sea, even at night. I never felt the immense space around me but once, and then only for an instant. It was while returning from Europe by steamer. I was standing at the bow, looking forward into the gathering twilight mist, which mingled sky and sea together, so that it was impossible to discover the horizon. Above, it was clear and starry, and beneath smooth—there was no swell even. The

ship was running 14 knots an hour, and the water parted in wreaths of light beneath me, while the rapid beat of the ponderous wheels filling my ears, seemed in the silence, otherwise unbroken, some strange and mighty sea-sound. I peered long into the veil beyond, and, as I thought of the days that we had uninterruptedly pursued our way, and those which must yet pass before we reach our port, a realization of oceanic space burst upon me like a flash of light. It was overpowering, but passed as quickly as it came, and the sea was itself again.

I sometimes stroll at nightfall along the fine beach that runs back from the point, and watch the darkness gather over the water, and as the horizon begins to grow indistinct, and flicker before the intense gaze, one becomes conscious of a weird presence giving a strange animation to the breakers that come rolling from the seaward with devouring intent, each moment increasing in size, and yawning with wilder eagerness, until, checked by the limit at which the "proud waves are stayed," with a roar and white gnashing of teeth they break and dissolve into thin foam, retreating with a harsh murmur, and gather anew to the vain endeavor. I have watched them sometimes until an unconquerable frenzy of dread has come over me, and I have rushed far up the beach for security.

It is grand to see from such a place as this, the day-tide run through its flood and ebb; the sky grow golden with the approaching sun-rise, and the little clouds along the horizon change from their dull grey, to the warmth and life of sunlight, till the sun bursts "sudden-slow" on the sight, and the little waves come dancing in with each its line of gold or crimson mingling them with the white foam on the sand. Then the sun mounts upward through all the changes of the cloud-filled sky, to the high flood of noon with its white heat, its calm and repose. The "Modern Painters" says, I think, that there is no sentiment in noon-day, but to me there is one higher, purer, than in any other time of day. There is a grandeur, a serenity, and breadth we find at no other hour—a sentiment of repose, as of some mighty element, impassive and unchangeable in its white-hot misty skies. Now, even, as I lie on the turf at the sunny side of the light-house, the sun at noon warms me into apathy and dreaminess, and I hardly know that it is not summer.

Then, as the sun sinks, the scud-clouds drift over it, each choosing from its light such garment of color as best suits itself—gold, and crimson, and purple, and some are content with a quieter grey—and when the day is done, and the sky is golden again with twilight, their masses float over it in cold dead blue, so ghost-like that one shrinks from the ungenial hue. Then the waves come dancing in again, in lines of that blue, woven in with the gold of the sky and the sea green, and lapping against some stranded fragments of timber, remnants perhaps of some mighty ship. How exquisite an illustration the whole seems of Longfellow's lines—

"Clouds in the evening sky more darkly gather
And shattered wrecks lie thicker on the strand."

Far off, resting on the still glowing horizon, rise little pinnacles of cloud, glimmer-

ings of hope and life, while the solitary island seen to the seaward, is severed by the mirage, and floats in the air like the mockery of some fairy illusion, some air-built land, after which you might sail for ever.

You will ask me what I do here. I sketch almost every day. Sheltered by some bluff bank from the wind, and with two overcoats on, I work in mittens sometimes, and sometimes it is so quiet and sunny, that I can work as well as in October. For more than a week we have had most glorious weather—quiet!—oh, how quiet! The vessels pass lazily by, with every foot of canvas spread to catch all that may be of the chance breathings of the wind—the sea-birds sail leisurely around the point, turning side-wise to look what sort of creature I am, basking in the sunlight with an overcoat on, and the surf rolls in with a hushed sound, like distant thunder, or swelling sluggishly over the rocks, meets in gurgling, yeasty eddies on the other side. And so the day passes, in tranquillity and lazy labor.

Yours truly,
W.

December 25th.

DEAR S.,—Our glorious weather of my last date ended in a southeaster. The surf began to roll in grandly, and taking my painting materials, I went out on the beach. Leaden grey clouds unbroken covered the sky, and the black, abysmal water was streaked with long lines of driven foam; the breakers, no longer coming up to the beach with staid and measured motion, hurried in beaten down by the wind, surf after surf in quick succession, making a broad band of froth, whitening along the beach for miles, and lessening into a thread in the distance; and the creamy foam ridged up along the water line was flirited by the wind in clots and fragments high up the beach. The few vessels that passed hurried along, under close reefed sails, looking uncomfortable and frightened. I cowered in the rifts in the sand bank that bounds the beach, till the rain began to come in drops not few and far aslant, when I gathered myself up and started for the light.

Bound in doors for a time, I amused myself listening to the yarns of the light-keeper, and chatting with the girls, when they had recovered from their diffidence sufficiently to converse freely. The light-keeper is a sturdy, weather-beaten old seaman, sincere, and simple-hearted as a child. He lives in this little world of his, contented, with his family, his religion, and his light. (I name them in the order of importance they assume in his speaking of them.) Of the efficacy and importance of the latter he is very proud. He says, that "on a right dark night you can see to read all round the light-house." "Happy, thrice happy he," ignorant of the perplexities of philosophy, and the pains of money-making. The eldest daughter, Lydia, a tall, graceful girl, with fine though irregular features, exquisitely chiselled mouth and chin, and heavy-lidded Madonna eyes filled almost to overflowing with the dormant feeling of deep-souled, earnest woman, moves about the house quiet, and as though her future life with all its weight and sadness shone around her. The next, Anna, is fuller in